

## ***XI. Continuity of Operations and Contingency Planning***

The Department defines a Continuity of Operations (COO) Plan as a method for responding to the loss of an application or system due to a disaster such as a flood, fire, computer virus, or major software or hardware failure. This includes failures due to the Y2K problem. The Department's strategy is to monitor bureau and office progress on meeting specified Y2K compliant milestone targets and goals through risk identification and abatement. Reports submitted from the Y2K Executives to the CIO, as soon as problems are identified, alert management early on to those systems which may not make their project milestones.

Routine system development or maintenance efforts typically have schedule slippages which are usually non-fatal, but common. For obvious reasons these slippages must be eliminated or drastically reduced during our Y2K efforts. Bureaus and offices will develop realistic contingency plans, including the redirecting of resources (to include possible contractor assistance) to ensure the continuity of mission critical systems.

Potential factors that may disrupt a project plan include: funding is not identified in a timely manner, system conversion efforts are hampered by loss of code or other disruption, interface or feeder systems are not compliant, etc. The contingency plan will also propose alternative strategies or methods to meet those milestones.

Bureau and office project managers will be required to include the following elements in their contingency plans and identify the associated risks for any system - software, hardware, or embedded chip - that is two months or more behind schedule.

- System name
- Length of delay
- Reason for delay
- Proposed alternatives for meeting the schedule
- Original estimated completion date
- New schedule for replacement or completion of remaining phases
- Description of the funding (or other IT resources) being devoted to fixing the system.

### **Continuity of Operations**

In March 1998 the Department issued final guidance requiring preparation of COO plans for all organizational elements of the Department (that is, offices, facilities, administrative units, and other locations and site where functions of the Department are conducted). There will not be a single plan for the Department or for any operating bureau since the type of business activities, the nature of threats and risks to business continuity, and the physical and operating circumstances vary widely from location to location.

COO Plans are to include such items as:

- Identification of Essential Activities and Functions
- Identification and protection of Vital Records, Systems, and Equipment
- Succession and Delegations of Authority
- Identification and preparation of Relocation/Alternate Work Sites
- Identification and training of an Emergency Organization
- Warning and Notification Procedures
- Employee Identification and Services
- Communications Plan (internal and external)
- Restoration Plan
- Training and Exercises Plan

Schedule for completing COO Plans:

- July 1998 - "Basic Capability Plans" are to be completed for all locations
- September 1998 - "Complete Plans" for high priority locations such as headquarters offices and administrative service centers
- September 1999 - "Complete Plans" for all locations

**Core Business Functions [Essential Activities and Functions]**

The Departmental guidance identifies the following minimum or "core" essential activities and functions:

- Protect employees, visitors, and the public
- Provide support services for affected employees
- Ensure continue and uninterrupted command, control, and leadership of the affected organization
- Protect critical facilities, systems, equipment, and records
- Communicate with employees, the public, and key external parties (partners, stakeholders, customers)
- Provide services and activities under the Federal Response Plan, the National Contingency Plan, the Federal Radiological Emergency Response Plan, and E.O. 12656
- Restore normal functions and activities of the organization

Additional essential activities and functions may be identified by organizations or facilities preparing COO Plans, based on the nature of the normal activities and functions of the organization or facility. Examples might include feeding and watering livestock or hatchery stock, monitoring oil and gas production, law enforcement and permitting activities, conduct of administrative functions such as payroll and fiscal services, or firefighting.